

Tales of Old - Dorp

BY

• W. EARL • WELLER •

• DECORATED • BY •

• WALTER • REAGLES •



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• SCHENECTADY • N. Y. •

Introduction

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JUST a few stories gleaned from the **Tales of Old Dorp** many that may be told of our old Dutch town. Halting and crudely they are told and yet, we hope, they may serve to tide over some idle hours. Are they all true? Well, yes and no. Take the skeleton story for instance. As far as can be found out this is the first time the story has been told in print. The mound, the skeleton, the workmen are all true, but the details---well the story has been handed down for about a century now, and next to a fish story a ghost story will stand more stretching than anything we know. The story of the editor is true and we might even mention the name of the luckless scribe, but what's the use? Let him rest in peace. Curious ones will find the very story that caused all the trouble if they care to search the files of the Reflector. The other stories are true as far as the main facts go but the writer would hate to risk his hope of future salvation on the details. Take them as they are meant, merely as stories told when Dorp was

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young. The "Notes," kind reader, are true, unvarnished, undecorated facts, gathered from sources that may be considered reliable. The only excuse for them is that the facts contained are not generally known.

The pictures have been taken with two objects in view---first, to illustrate the text; and second, to show that there are "beauty spots" right here, in and around Schenectady.

We will not apologize for the booklet. If we once started to do so the ink would run out long before a quarter of the thousand and one imperfections had been touched upon, so we will merely ask your indulgence for this "first attempt."

W. E. W.

Schenectady, N. Y.,
September, 1907.

Holland Gin





Tales of Old Dorp
N a day, late in October, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-two, some laborers were engaged in preparing a foundation for a new farm building on the lands of John J. Van Eps. The

place where the men were working was situated at the foot of the hills that skirt the flats in the Town of Rotterdam, and had long been a playground for the few children of the neighborhood. Two things united to attract the youngsters to this certain spot; first, the hills, with their pine covered slopes; and second, a most peculiar looking mound of earth. The mound was about eight feet in height and exceptionally well shaped for that most diverting sport known as "rolling," consequently one could see almost any day a motley array of young Schermerhorns, Veeders and Van Epses, with an occasional Bradt thrown in, go rolling head over heels down the grass covered slope. The clamor of the aforementioned members of the rising generation grated on the sensitive auditory nerves of Van Eps the

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elder, and when he found his barns no longer capable of holding the bountiful crops, he decided to kill two birds with one stone by building a new barn on the ground occupied by the mound.

The mound, let us explain, in passing, was something of a mystery. Van Otto, the first settler in the Bouwlandt, had noticed and remarked it early in 1680. He was not of an inquiring nature, however, and made no effort to solve the mystery. Some of the other settlers were a little more curious and they questioned the Indians living in the neighborhood concerning the mound. None of them appeared to have any knowledge of the history or origin of the mound, or, if they did, fear, or something akin thereto, held them silent. Late in the seventeen seventies, a local antiquarian, whose name is forgotten, tried to brush away the film of the supernatural that had gathered over the silent mound. To clear away the mound and thus to tear its secret from it was a work beyond him--- antiquarians not being particularly adapted to manual labor or any other form of useful work---

so he proposed to get at its history by a diligent inquiry among the few Mohawks still living. Several of these expressed an utter lack of knowledge concerning the miniature hill although some advanced the theory that the evil one had had a finger in its making. Se-che-ho-wan, a Mohawk chieftian, then more than a hundred years old, said that the origin of the mound had been forgotten long before he was born. This left our antiquarian stranded and he gave over the quest. The heap of earth was left alone to serve as a playground for the children, and to gather all sorts of ghost stories to itself. Now, to return to our story.

Three workmen---their superstitious fears having been dispelled by Mr. Van Eps, aided and abetted by some rare old Holland Gin---were hard at work on the previously mentioned October day, reducing the mound to the level of the surrounding country. Occasionally the spades would strike a stone, causing cold chills to chase one another industriously up and down the spines of the workmen. This always meant

Tales of a hurried consultation with the gin bottle, the
Old Darp brief communion being productive of renewed
courage. With many such interruptions, the
work proceeded, the mound gradually melting
away, much to the disgust of the children who
had gathered to watch the work of destruction.

Suddenly the spade of one of the workmen
went almost out of sight in the soft earth. The
man was not prepared for this lack of resistance
and he pitched headlong against the bank, caus-
ing a miniature landslide that partially buried
him. As the earth was closing on him he was
conscious of a howl of dismay from his com-
rades and a chorus of squeals and squeaks from
the juvenile audience. For a moment or two he
did not move expecting his comrades to come to
his assistance. The helping hand not being
forthcoming, our hero began to believe that he
was buried clean out of sight. The thought
was not consoling and he began to kick and
wiggle. A few kicks and a couple of hitches
and he arose gradually to his feet, searching his
mind and his vocabulary for some tender senti-



The Kayaderosseras Trail

ments by which he could suitably express to his fellow workmen the love he bore them for not helping him in his hour of need. As he arose, his back was toward the mound, his eyes were full of dirt and his mouth was full of the finest collection of genuine Dutch cusswords imaginable. After getting to his feet, his first care was to remove enough of the debris from his eyes to enable him to see more clearly the effects of the language he had been storing up. When he had partially recovered the use of his optics, he glanced around for his two companions, and was surprised to see them rapidly vanishing in the distance. This rather disturbed him, as he could see no cause for their hurried departure. Thinking that his mental operations would be accelerated by a sip or two, he turned to reach for the bottle, only to see a skeleton grinning fiendishly at him from the depths of a partially filled cave. Pausing just long enough to grab the bottle, he made a rapid exit in the general direction in which he had seen his terror stricken fellows disappear.

**Tales of
Old Dorp**

Being somewhat of a sprinter, he soon overhauled his fleeing brothers, and a council of war, in which the bottle figured conspicuously, was held. As they talked, Dutch courage---or mayhap it was Dutch gin---began to assert itself, and it was unanimously voted to return to the scene of the recent catastrophe and dare the "dark one" to do his worst. And so back they went, these brave Dutch forebears of ours, to see just what sort of a trap the Prince of Darkness had prepared for them. Arriving at the mound they saw their spectre---the skeleton of some man mighty of limb, who had lived and died long years---perhaps, even centuries---before a white man ever set eyes on the Mohawk. The skeleton was in a sitting position, with its face toward the east to greet the rising sun. The fleshless arms were folded across a fleshless chest and the skull, with its horrid resemblance to a living face, leaned back against the earthly wall, grinning as though in mockery of death.

For a moment a feeling of awe held our heroes spellbound. But it was only for a

moment. Soon the fumes of the beverage **Tales of**
they had been consuming so freely began to **Old Drap**
make themselves felt. Awe gave place to
avarice, and they began to toss aside the earth in
the mad endeavor to locate the treasure that they
supposed the dead man to be guarding. As
spadeful after spadeful was removed the skele-
ton gradually fell apart until a pile of bones was
the result. The frenzied effort to locate a sup-
posed treasure disclosed a vase of curious
workmanship. A blow from a spade shattered
the vessel, but no stream of gold or silver flowed
from the pieces. Merely a little cloud of white
dust arose, to be wafted away the next moment
by a breath of wind. Afterwards, in telling the
story, the workmen made this dust assume won-
derful shapes until finally it came to be believed
that the soul of the dead man had been imprisoned
in the vase by some enemy, and that the ruth-
less blow, shattering the vase, had also shattered
the fetters that bound the shade and started it
on its delayed trip to the "Happy Hunting
Grounds." The bones were then carelessly

**Tales of
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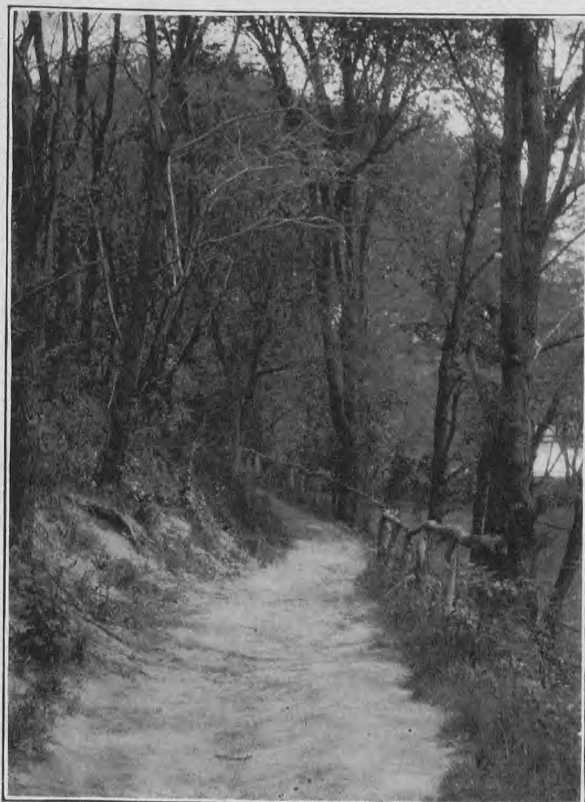
tumbled into a hole and the work of reducing the mound was continued.

When the day's work was over, the workmen were invited to sit down to the table of their employer, Mr. Van Eps, to a substantial Dutch meal. Good trenchermen and better drinkers were these old Schenectadians, and the October sun was miles below the horizon before they arose, on none too steady legs, and started on their two mile tramp back to town. As they neared the scene of the day's labors, many an uneasy glance was cast towards the spot. Suddenly a cry of terror pierced the air, and two of the men started off on a mad race for the town "to procure assistance," as they afterwards said. They were traveling on an express schedule and did not have time to notice, until they were safely bestowed in their favorite tavern, that their comrade was not with them. Then they told their story---a story in which ghosts, hob-goblins and other uncanny things were conspicuous. Their listeners were conscious of curious, tingling sensations in their

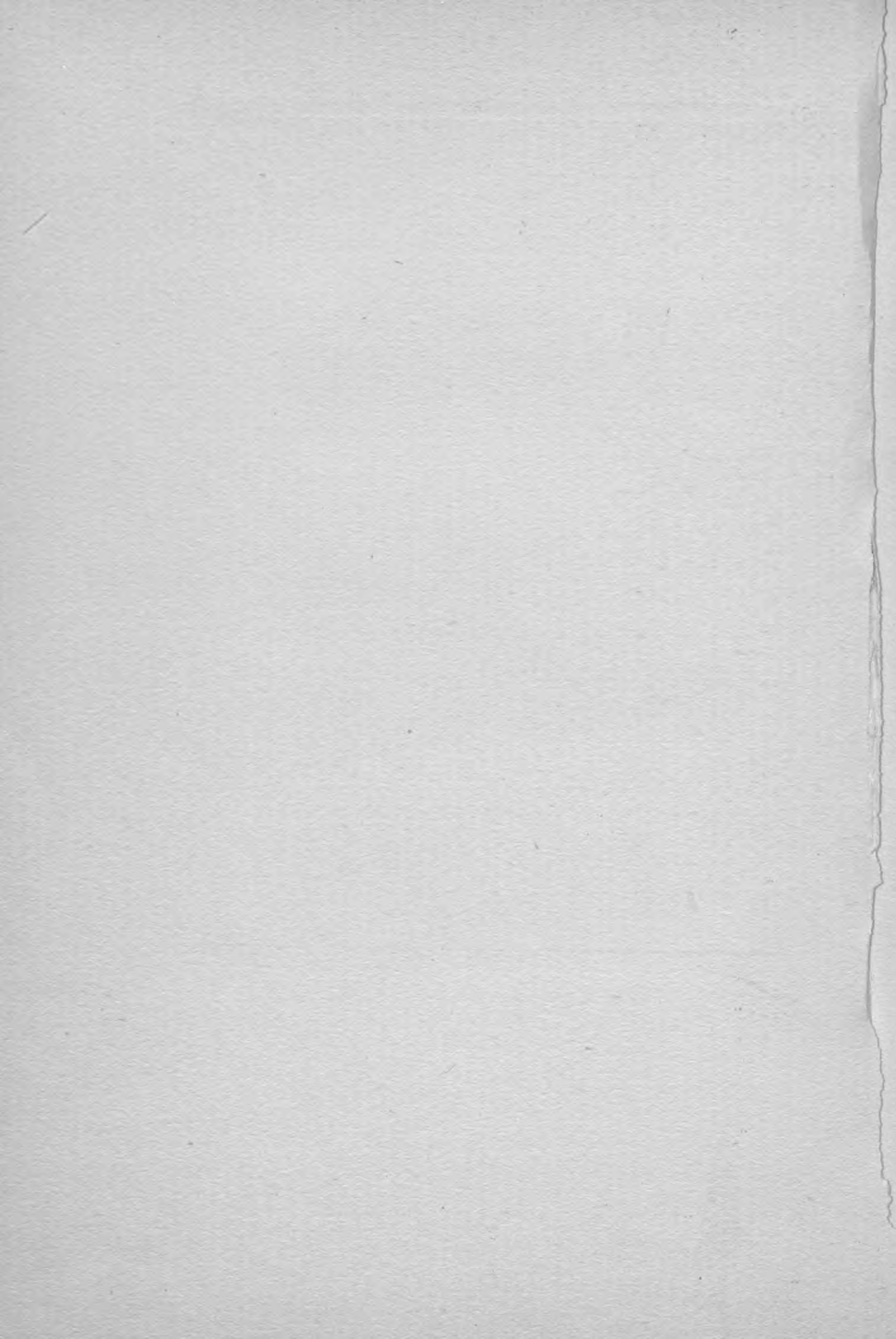
spinal columns at times, and many an apprehensive look was cast toward the door, as though the advent of one of these supernatural beings was momentarily expected. All sorts of conjectures were made and scores of explanations were advanced to solve the mystery, but no one suggested such a thing as a relief expedition to locate the missing man.

In the morning, with a good sized mob at their heels, our two laborers started toward the scene of their adventures of the previous day. Not a sign of their missing comrade did they see until they arrived nearly opposite the now dreaded mound. Then one of them spied a body huddled in a pitiful heap, in the bottom of a dry ditch to the right of the road. All felt a curious lump rise to their throats, conversation ceased, and slowly the men walked toward the body. As they came nearer they could see bloody marks on the face, and dark spots, presumably of the same material, on the shirt of the victim, as well as scattered on the stones that lined the ditch. Reverently, two of the crowd bent over

Tales of to lift the corpse from the ditch, when "the
Old Borp corpse," with a sleepy movement, gave vent to
an eighteen horse-power snore. The hands
that had been stretched out in reverence to lift
the remains now roughly grasped and shook the
sleeper, until at last, with a vexed look, the man
sat up and blinked at his audience. Then came
the prize ghost story of the week, running some-
thing after this fashion:---Hans, lets us call him
since his real name is unknown, was troubled
by a badly behaved boot and had stopped to
argue awhile with the offender, expecting to
overtake his companions. While engaged in
softly cussing the refractory boot, he was terror-
stricken to see the skeleton of a man, at least
ten feet tall, approaching him. In its bony hand
it held a club, heavy enough to brain an ox,
while its bones had a most disconcerting way of
rattling at every step. Hans could feel his
blood fairly turn to ice in his veins. He tried
to cry out, but he had for the moment lost the
use of his vocal organs. Rapidly the skeleton
approached until it stood towering over the luck-



Abahabok Land



less Hans. The massive war club was raised, and frantically the Dutchman began to drag a forgotten prayer from some unused corner of his memory. Then the club started on its downward journey towards Hans' head. He remembered the sudden return of his vocal powers, attested by a scream, and then everything was a blank. This was Hans' story.

Thence forward Hans was a hero indeed. Children would run before him with gaping mouths. The "fraus" and "burgers" pointed him out to each other and to visitors as one of the sights of the old Dutch town. Again and again the story was told, each telling added a little to the stature of the ghost and to the reputation of our hero as well. We are told that Hans lived to a ripe old age, and that on his deathbed he solemnly assured the folks who had gathered round, that the skeleton was fully twenty feet tall.

Scoffers will say that Hans took too much gin to know whether he really saw the skeleton or not, and will throw out vile insinuations about

Tales of the creditability of our hero. For people of this
Old Dary ilk we have nothing but scorn, and so will not
give them the satisfaction of an argument. We
will say, however, that Ian Van Huysen, a farm
hand, employed on the next farm beyond Mr.
Van Eps' place, had put himself on record as
seeing a skull grinning at him from among the
pines just back of the place where the myster-
ious mound had stood. Ian had come to town
on a couple of errands and had fallen in with a
couple of cronies from Albany. The three had
then adjourned to a tavern on Frog Alley, and
it was late before they had finished telling their
troubles to each other. They may have stag-
gered a little as they parted, Ian may have been
slightly intoxicated, but that does not prove any-
thing, as we all know how much better we can
see somethings after a session at the altar of
Bacchus. And what is more, no self-respect-
ing, God-fearing Dutchman would think of seeing
a ghost, unless he---meaning the Dutchman, of
course---had a fair sized cargo aboard.

Nor is Ian the only one to corroborate Hans'

story. Many a stout Rotterdam farmer, returning from a protracted "errand" in town, has seen suspicious things in the vicinity of neighbor Van Eps' new barn, and with bated breath has told the story to a waiting wife. The story may have acted to prevent a severe tongue lashing, but no one would think of accusing these pious deacons of manufacturing these stories just to amuse their wives, and to stave off a flood of feminine eloquence.---Oh my! no.

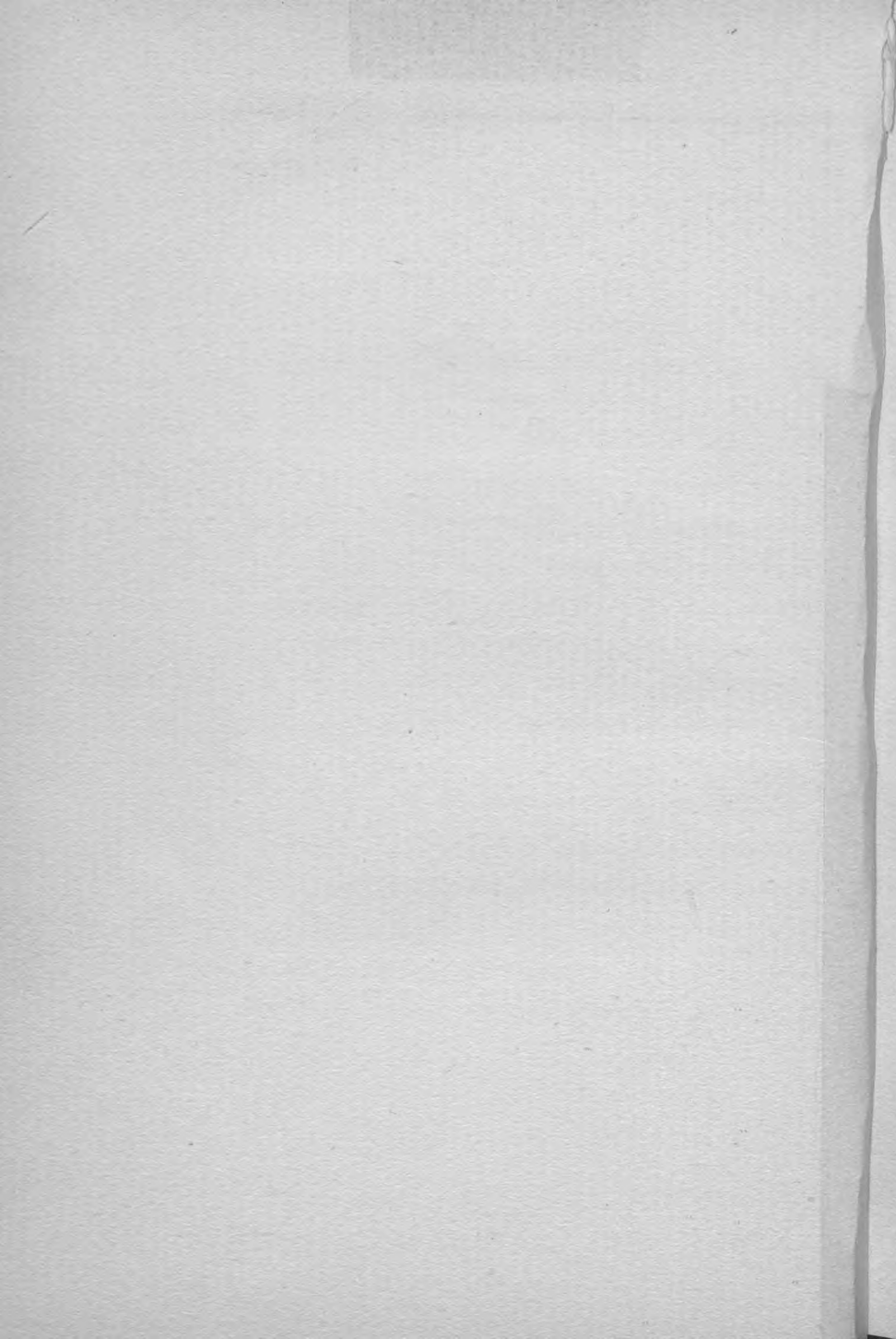
To those who still doubt, even in the face of this mass of proof, we suggest the following "personal" treatment:---Get a bottle of Holland gin---this can be procured at several places in Schenectady---and, well it's none of our business what you do with it, but just as a sort of suggestion we might say that gin was never meant for external use. Then just at nightfall take the road that leads along the north side of the canal, towards the pumping station. After the last electric light has been passed, you will notice on your left a range of low hills. Then watch closely, for just before you arrive at the old

Tales of Schermerhorn farm you are passing over the
Old Corp Van Eps place and are close to the location of
the mound. Take a firm grip on your courage,
and turning to the left, slowly approach the hills.
The wind will be whispering in the pines, and
the moonlight will be weaving most fantastic
pictures on the needle-carpeted ground and
then, if you do not see the skeleton, there was
something the matter with your gin.



The Hale







OMETHING over a hundred years *Vale of*
ago, while Union College was still in *Old Corp*
its infancy, the ground lying to the

east of the college---now traversed
by Lafayette Street and Nott Terrace
and occupied in part by the entrance
to the cemetery---was known as "The Vale."

Tradition tells us that for natural beauty "The
Vale" was unsurpassed. A limpid creek purred
between grassy banks, willows dipped the tips
of their branches in the clear water, and elms
and maples grew in stately beauty farther up
the slopes. Over to the north the horizon was
formed by Niskayuna Hill, across which ran
Niskayuna Street, while to the south rose
Albany and Liberty Hills, thus forming a little
valley.

It was to this spot---secluded then---that con-
scientious students came with their lessons.
Many a youngster intent on the pursuit of
elusive knowledge wandered through this vale,
book in hand, until, finding a shady nook, he has
thrown himself on the sod---book in front of

Tales of him---for an hour's quiet study. Then the
Old Corp murmuring of the brook and the suppressed
twitter of the birds have forced themselves
on his attention. The book is forgotten, a
far-away look comes into his eyes and he
is dreaming day dreams, building air castles.
Such was the magic of the place. Suddenly,
with a start, he comes back to sad realities, only
to find the sun far down in the west. With a
lingering look he rises, takes his book and starts
back towards "old Union." At other times,
parties of the students would come, and the tiny
valley would ring with their shouts and laughter
as two of their number indulged in a friendly
scrap.

Nor were the students alone in their apprecia-
tion of the place. Moon-struck youths and
maidens from the old Dutch town below delighted
in the many hidden, natural cozy corners, in
which "The Vale" abounded. Here many of
our grandmothers---their faces against a back-
ground of blue sky and green branches---have
darted the glances that made our grandfathers

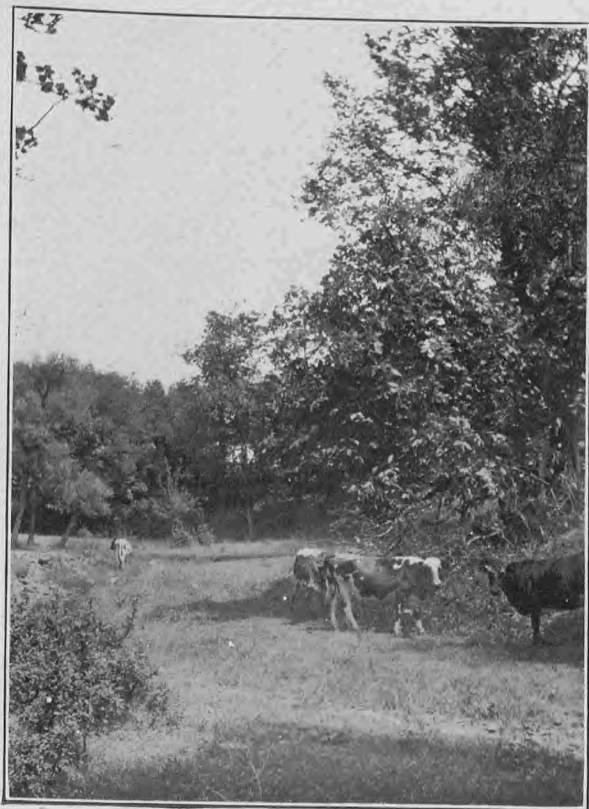
forget, for the time, all the troubles of this mundane sphere, and at the same time causing a brisk knot-tying business for "Dominie" Romeyn. "The Vale" in fact, was a regular Arcadia to the youngsters of college and town.

This Eden, of course could not last, and one bright day "Old Nick" found his way through the gates. Of his coming we have nothing to say, but of his staying and his going---well it all happened this way. One day as a freshman sat dreaming of the eyes of the girl he had left behind, a charge of bird shot brought the leaves and twigs tumbling about him, and with a whoop, a wild looking sort of an individual came charging down upon him. The freshman could see no real reason for lingering so he beat a hasty retreat, leaving a dog-eared Virgil as a prisoner of war in the hands of the unknown enemy. Other students were similarly ejected, and the stranger mounted guard---a shot gun over his shoulder, two knives and a hatchet in his belt. The constable attempted to argue with the self-appointed guard, and then spent

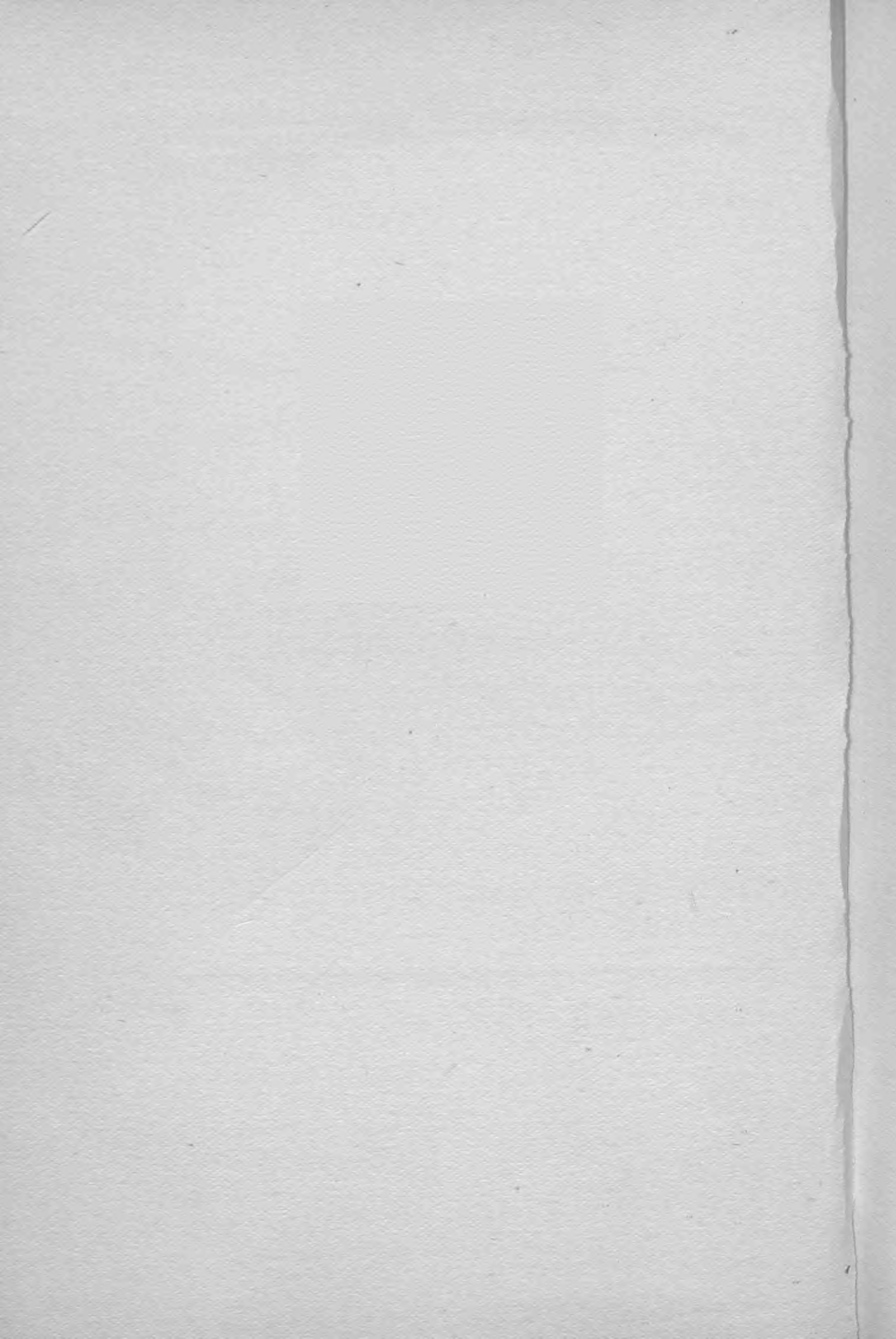
Tales of the next week extracting bird shot from different
Old Bory portions of his anatomy. His people had owned the vale---so the stranger said---years ago. True they had sold it, but that was a matter of utter indifference to the man, who had evidently been born a century too soon to take his place among the "kings of finance" in Wall Street.

As the unknown was obviously crazy, and as he handled his shot gun remarkably carelessly, the representative of the majesty of the law decided that life was sweet, and that a medal of bravery would be of no real importance to a corpse, so after carefully backing out of the vale the "police department" hied itself back to the town hall to assist the constable in removing superfluous lead.

For weeks the madman held the vale against all comers, until finally, he attempted a piece of rashness that proved to be his undoing. One Sunday morning---inspired by the Devil, said one pious dame---he suddenly concluded the time was ripe for the demise of some of the right religious. Any one would have answered, but



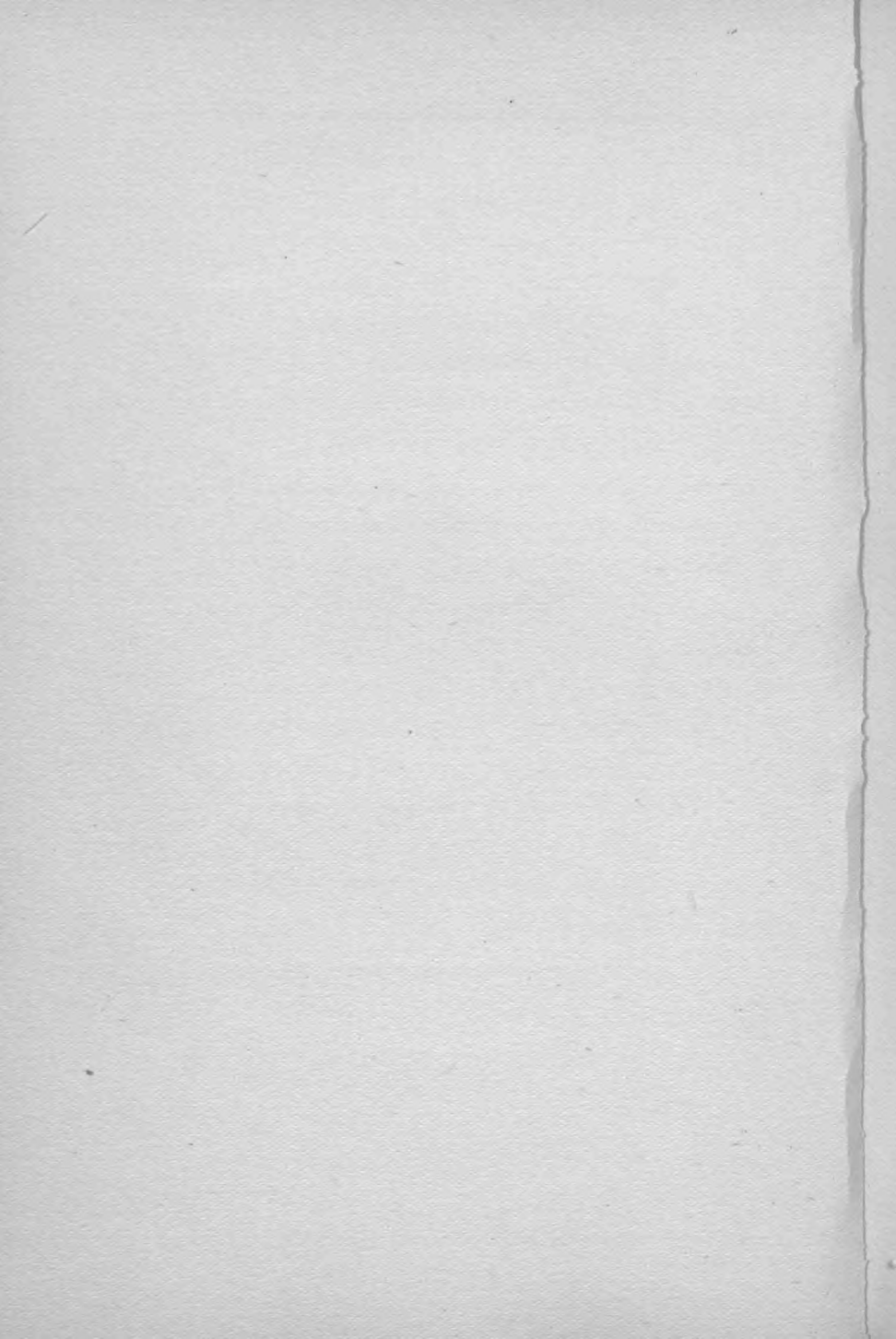
Beukendaal Battlefield



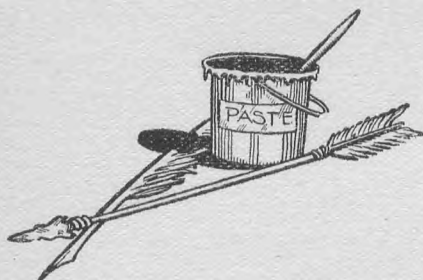
a dominie was preferred. Changing his shot gun for a rifle, the man walked out of the vale and down Niskayuna Street to the old Dutch Church. Inside was Dominie Romeyn administering theology in large chunks to a nodding congregation. Through the open window the madman could see the minister in the pulpit. Quickly he raised his rifle and sent a ball whistling through the window, to bury itself in the pulpit, at the feet of the dominie. In the excitement that followed, the man was able to make his escape to the fastness of the vale.

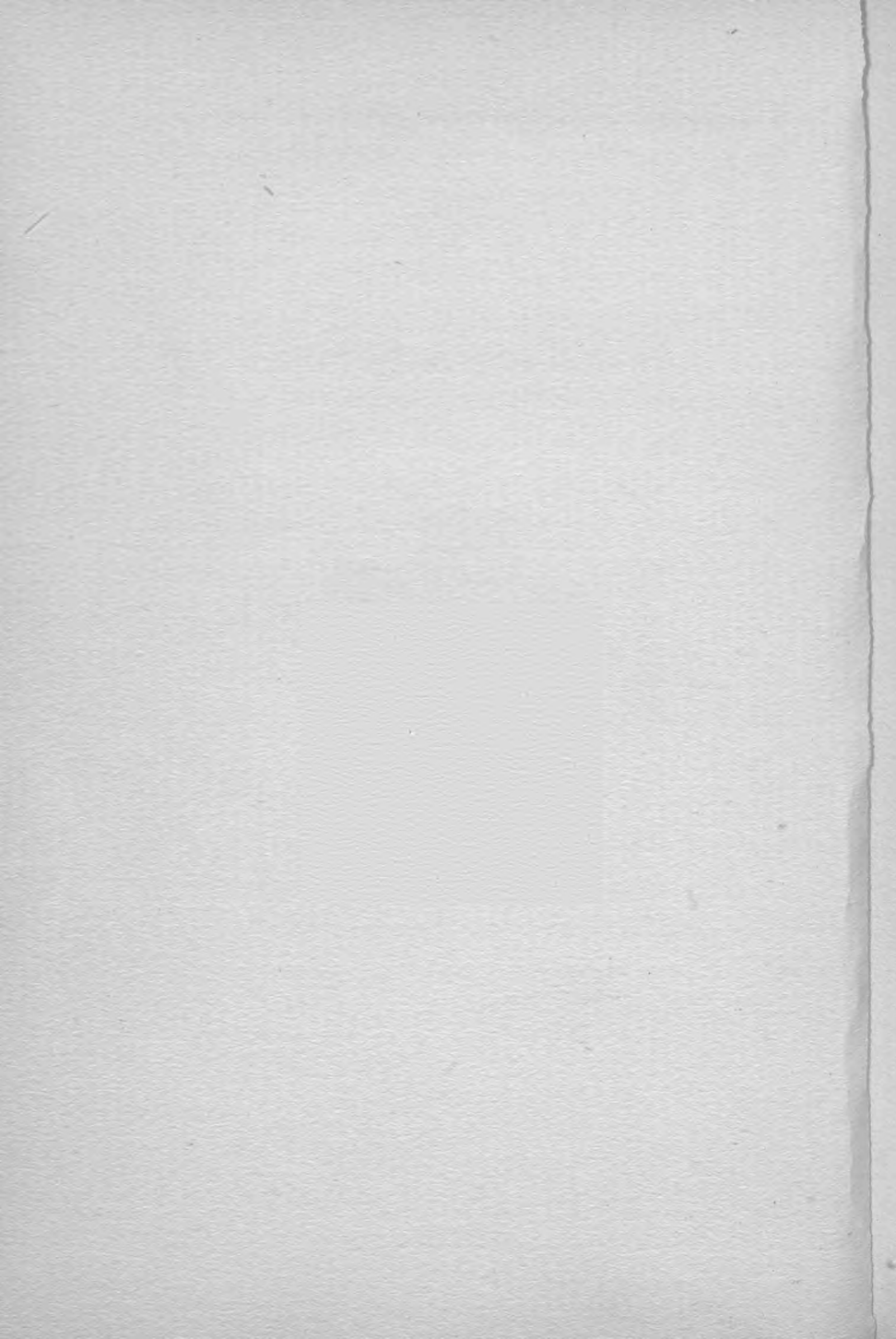
The act aroused the good people of the town to the fact, that the man whom they regarded more or less in the nature of a joke, was really dangerous. A council of war was called to devise ways and means of ridding the town of the man. Plans, without number, were proposed, picked apart and rejected. Meanwhile the students, with whom the dominie was a prime favorite, decided to solve the riddle for themselves. That night, a score, perhaps, of the students stole silently to the vale. Secreting

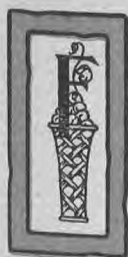
Tales of themselves behind trees they began a cautious
Old Barp advance towards the brook. In the moonlight they caught a glimpse of the man, gun on shoulder, patrolling the ground he claimed as his own. A whistle drew his attention to the opposite side of the creek, and then, with a rush, the students were on their man. A blanket was tossed over his head, his weapons were wrenched from him, and he was sent headlong into the creek. After a couple of thorough duckings, the thoroughly subdued man was removed from the water and escorted to Niskayuna Street. His head was turned towards the east and he was told to run. A couple of lusty swats with the stock of his own gun started the scourge of the vale on the back trail, and the little valley again became the resting place for the students and people of the town.



How the Editor Interfered With Cupid







IFTY years ago local news was not **Tales of**
as plentiful in Schenectady as at **Old Dorp**
present, and many a time a hustling

city editor has found himself at his wit's end to fill his few "local" columns with readable news. It was in such

a predicament that the editor of "The Schenectady Democrat and Reflector" found himself on a warm afternoon in July, 1857. Early in the morning the chief of the composing room had sent the "devil" to the editorial sanctum to inform the scribbling gentleman that copy was as scarce as water at a Dutch picnic.

After hearing this piece of news, the editor's first move was to shy a paste pot at the bearer of the unwelcome tidings. Having thus paid his respects to the traditions of the office, he started to work. Yard after yard of copy was reeled off. Words flowed like water, and caustic wit, that would have given Bill Nye serious inflammation in the jealousy glands, fairly bubbled forth. Sarcasm, humor, pathos all found their places under the direction of the prolific pencil.

Tales of Nine o'clock boomed from the clock tower, and
Old Bory with a sigh, the editor rose, stretched, and then hurried to the composing room with the copy. Without comment, the foreman received the paper and hastily distributed it among the compositors. The clicking of the types as they dropped rapidly into the sticks began again, and the relieved editor returned to his office for a couple of winks.

Hardly had he closed his eyes, when that imp of mischief, the printer's "devil," again came to disturb him. Thrusting a well besmeared face through the narrowest possible opening in the door, the youngster informed the hard working pencil pusher that "De boss says dat you'se got two columns and er stick to go yit." The paste pot was out of reach, so the editor had to content himself hurling scathing remarks at the kid, who, by the way, was remark proof. The editorial comments being unworthy of notice, the "devil" returned to the pleasing occupation of teaching the office cat to drink benzine, while the poor editor once more reached for his pencil.



The Platter Kill

All local subjects had been exhausted by this time, and our friend, the editor, was compelled to train the guns of his ridicule and sarcasm on Albany. "The Knickerbocker" and "The Argus" were in a polite but decisive manner characterized as liars of the first water. Personal remarks were the order of the day, and if one-half of the statements made were even partially true the prisoners in the penitentiary would have cause to complain if they were compelled to associate with the editors of these two papers. After Albany had been whipped into shape, the national government caught it, and the President was told a few things that would have opened his eyes, could he but have seen a "Reflector." By the time this batch of copy was ready it was noon and an hour's rest was a certainty.

For three long hours the foreman forgot to call for more copy and the editor enjoyed the rest of the righteous. About ten minutes before it was time for the paper to go to press, the foreman himself burst in, wild eyed, on the

Tales of editor's dream, with the dreaded intelligence
Old Dorp that one column was shy about a dozen lines.
A hurried inventory of available clippings failed
to disclose anything of the required length, and
he began to rack his brains for a "local." It
occurred to the editor that there were several
among his acquaintances who were scheduled
to be married. His pencil scratched hastily
over some paper, and when the "Reflector"
appeared that evening the following was apparent
in a very prominent place:

"STRAY LEAVES.

From a Sybilline Book, revealing some
important proceedings on the eve of consum-
mation by Hymen in his court, to be held
in and for the city of "Dorp" during the
year of 1857.

F—— + K——
S—— + W——r
M—— + W——l"

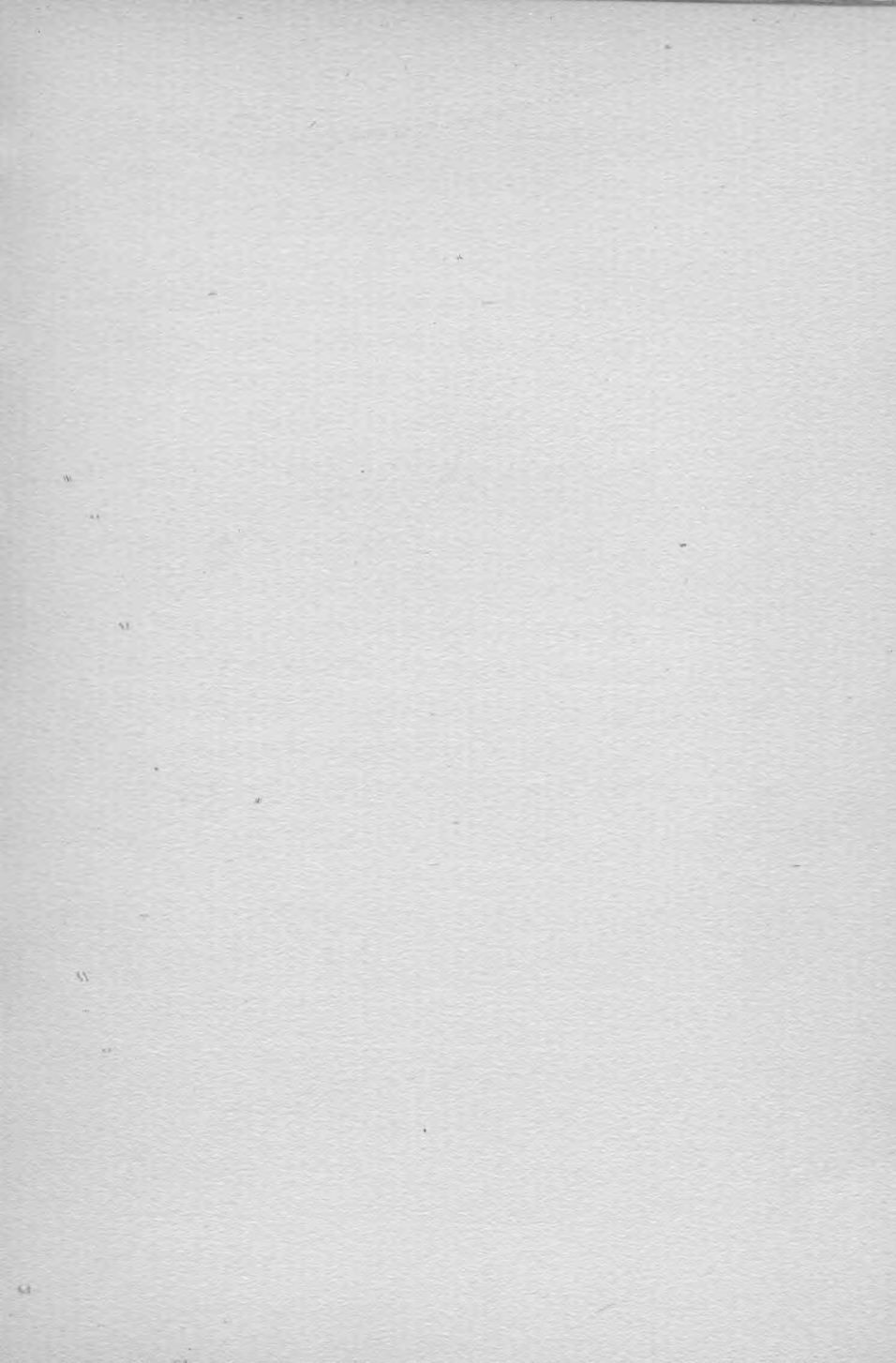
The little offering was signed with the promise
of more anon, and what a howl went up. The
fair ones, whose initials appeared, were driven

to the verge of insanity by the little pleasantries of their friends, while their male friends were compelled to indulge in more than one fistic encounter to avenge insults, fancied or real, arising from the paragraph. Young ladies who were entertaining the bachelorhood of the town, scanned the columns of the paper each week, with fear and tremblings. Young men, who were on the point of offering their hearts and hands to some member of the fairer sex, shied off like two-year-olds, and breach of promise suits were in the air.

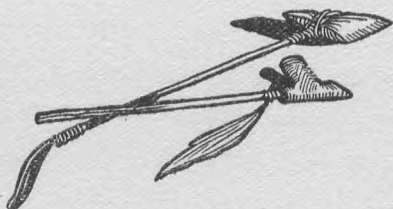
The editor grew decidedly unpopular with the younger element, and yet, none dared tell him of the wrath, for fear of a summary vengeance from the editorial pen. Matters grew worse and worse, until finally, one of the "afflicted" took matters in hand and wrote a scathing letter to the editor. The aforementioned letter was just bubbling over with sarcasm, even hinting that the author or authors of the offending paragraph were attempting to make "engagements for others because they were unable to make any for

Tales of themselves." He then proceeded, and with the
Old Durp paragraph as a text, read the riot act to every-
one who had had any hand in the "Sybilline
Book."

The flood of indignation was too much for
the poor editor and he "backed water,"
"crawled" and did other things not consistent
with the dignity of the editorial position, admit-
ting that while he felt fully capable of saying
harsh things about the President, the Governor,
the King of England and a few others, he had
been forced to come to the conclusion that the
young ladies of Schenectady were beyond his
powers. The complete capitulation of the scrib-
bler restored peace and quiet, and things once
more resumed their accustomed trend.



The Last of the Mohawks





F one will take the time and trouble Tales of
Old Sarp
to burrow among the files of old
newspapers or among the more
ancient documents filed in the
County Clerk's Office, one will
uncover many a delightful tale of
Old Schenectady. Some will provoke a smile,
others will bring a mistiness to the eye; some
will tell of happiness, others will be born of
misery; some will murmur with the song of the
pine trees, others will peal with the laughter of the
social gathering; but all, even the saddest, will
justify the use of the adjective "delightful." If
you have smiled with us over the fright of the
three Dutch laborers, now find a little pity for
the passing of the "Last of the Mohawks."



About noon, on a day in August, in the year
1789, a Mohawk Indian, dressed after the
fashion of his fathers, entered the little town
of Schenectady from the Rotterdam road. All
the morning he had been fishing farther up the

Tales of river, and the string of fish he carried would
Old Thorp have driven many of the amateur fishermen of to-day into hysterics. Scant notice was paid to the red man. Every one knew him as a sort of "ne'er-do-well" and the fact that he had laid aside his more civilized attire and donned the feathers and the buckskin was accepted merely as one of his whims. To us, however, he is of more interest, so we must piece together our slight knowledge in the attempt to sketch his picture. Different accounts of him differ---one says that he was tall and straight and in the prime of his manhood, while another states just the contrary, making him bent with age. You may take your choice, reader, but for ourselves, we prefer to think of him as tall and straight and lithe. He was dressed in the long leggings, moccasins, gee-string and blanket of the Mohawks, and a single eagle's feather was twined into his jet black hair. A knife and a hatchet were thrust through a throng of leather on his right side. A rifle carried in his left hand completed his armament. The fish, strung

together on some tough river grass, he carried **Tales of**
in his right hand. So much for his appearance. **Old Corp**

Had we have known his history, we would have recognized him as the last of his tribe. One by one his fellows had been called by the "great spirit" until he alone was left. His home was hidden away somewhere in the Kaheek-yononde---or the Hill of Strawberries---being the very hill through which the Platter Kill bubbles and bounds on its way to join the river. Above him stretched the Woestina of the Dutch, the hunting grounds of the Mohawks, and below spread the Vlachtelandt, the farm land of the Dutch, and the Indians before them. Ian Mabie's house was located near the river, somewhere to the west of the hill he claimed as his own, while towards the east the Bradt house sent its sharp roof skyward. Across the river were the Tou-ar-eu-ne, now the Glenville Hills. The place was, and is to this day, a spot of great natural beauty, and had done much to keep alive in our Indian's breast the traditions of his people. Many of the habits---more vices

Talks of than virtues, sad to say---of the white man had
Old Dorp he adopted. In two things he fairly excelled
the white man at his own game. He could
shoot better and drink more than any pale face
in the neighborhood. He was a life-long friend
of the whites and always found a welcome in
the old Dutch town. It was his custom to bring
the products of his skill as a fisherman or as a
hunter to Schenectady, and to exchange them
for the few articles his simple life demanded,
the remainder going for fire water.

On this day things were different. He took
his fish to one of his friends, but refused to
receive anything in exchange, saying "great
spirit call. Indian no need," and nothing further
would he say. Shunning the tavern, he started
to return, passing along what is now called
Center Street, to the place where he had left
his canoe. A couple of strokes sent the light
craft well out into the Binne Kill. The prow
was then turned west, and the Indian was started
on his homeward trip. By this time the sun
had disappeared behind the hills, and the mists



The Bradt House

of evening were beginning to gather over the water and some youths, bathing on a sand bar in the river, saw the Indian's canoe glide swiftly up the "Little River." Afterwards, in telling the story, they said that the canoe was proceeding up the stream with no visible motive power, the Mohawk sitting in the stern, with arms folded. Be this as it may, the Indian was never seen alive again. The next day his canoe was found drifting, right side up, far down the river.

The story is not yet done. A week or more after the finding of the canoe, a white man who had known the Indian, was fishing among the islands in the river. Glancing up he saw the Indian sitting on the high bank of one of the islands, probably Van Slyke's. His arms were clasped around his knees, and his face was turned towards the western hills, where the sun had disappeared an hour or more before. Thinking that the Mohawk was merely waiting for a lift across the river, the white man rowed to the island and invited the Indian to join him. At the first word, the Mohawk slowly turned his

Tales of head, and then faded from view. The fear of
Old Dorp the supernatural siezed the white man, and he
made haste to place a goodly distance between
himself and the island, never stopping, it is said,
until he had beached his boat below the old
Glenville bridge in Schenectady.

Several times since the Mohawk has been
seen sitting on the shore of the river---now
in one place, and now in another, but always
with his face towards the west and with his
arms clasped around his knees. Of late years
the story had been forgotten and the spectre
has ceased to appear, but who knows---perhaps
some evening in the "witching time" the shade
of the "Last of the Mohawks" may again be
seen wandering over his old hunting grounds,
seeking---always seeking for the rest that will
not come.

Some Notes by the Way





THREE OLD HOUSES in this **Tales of**
county are deserving of the personal **Old Burp**
acquaintance of every Schenec-
tadian. They are the Bradt House,
the Mabie House and the DeGraff
House, each of which has a history
as long as a "made-to-order" pedigree.

The Bradt House is located in the Town of
Rotterdam, just a few minutes' walk from the
pumping station. If you like a pleasant tramp
you may reach it by a three-mile walk along the
River Road. Or, if the walk has no charm for
you, there is another way to reach the old house
that cuts the walk in two. A Campbell Avenue
car will take you to the entrance of the "Camp-
bell Grounds." Follow the private road past
the present Schermerhorn House and you will
see a sharp-peaked white house rising before you.
This is the Bradt House. Built early in the seven-
teen hundreds, the loop-holed walls bear evidence
of the storms that beset the paths of the early set-
tlers when Schenectady was on the far frontier.
The house is typically Dutch and well deserves a
visit.

Tales of
Old Burp

The Mabie House is just outside the Village of Rotterdam Junction. An F. J. and G. car will take you to Washout, a station opposite the village. A couple of lusty ferrymen will be found on the river bank willing to take you across for the very nominal sum of five cents---size of passenger no objection. Once in the village anyone will tell you how to reach the Mabie House, which is located about a hundred yards to the right of the main street and about an eighth of a mile from the heart of the little railroad town. Like the Bradt House, the Mabie House is picturesque with a quaint "Dutchness," but there is one distinction that it does not share with any other house along the river---it is the oldest house still standing in the Mohawk Valley. Built in 1680 by Ian Mabie, it has come unscathed through 227 years of existence. Old Ian, the builder, has been dust for nearly two centuries now, but the house he built still stands and shelters some of his descendants.

Last, but with a history that puts its two



The Mabie House

older companions in the shade, comes the **De- Tales of**
Graff House in Glenville. The house is easily **Old Barp**

reached by means of the F. J. & G. Railroad. At Hardin's crossing, one leaves the car and walks along the road, to the left of the little red school house. After one has walked something less than half a mile one will see a dingy, unpainted, wooden house, that is rapidly falling to ruin. This is the DeGraff House, the scene of one of the bloodiest little battles this part of the state has known. An history of the city or county will tell you of the Beukendaal massacre of 1747. It will tell you how Mynheer Toll was killed by "preying" Indians from Canada. How a half hundred of Schenectady's young men went out for revenge, how they found the corpse of Mr. Toll leaning against a stone wall, how they fell into the ambush of the Indians, how they fought their way back to the DeGraff House after a third of their number had fallen, and how they defended the house until reinforcements could arrive. The battle was fought in the ravine that is just across the road from the

Tales of house, and the stone wall that crosses the creek, Old Dorp is pointed out as the very one against which Mr. Toll was placed by his slayers. It is interesting and restful to wander over the ground where history has been made, where brave men have fought and died. The imagination takes wings, and once more the battle is on for our especial benefit. Try it, reader, for Old Schenectady's sake.



Through shortsightedness, or something worse on the part of somebody, Schenectady has been blessed with several narrow streets, right where new ones are more than necessary. The blame for this has wrongfully been laid to the Dutch founders of the city. Take a map of the city and look at that part between the river and the railroad. You will see two broad streets crossing each other at right angles. Even if the street names are not on the map, you will recognize the two streets as Union and Church, the two original streets of the Dutch, in fact the



The De Graft House

only two they had a hand in laying out. Washington Avenue, State Street, Ferry Street and Front Street were never really streets in the Dutch town. The walls were built along these streets, and houses here grew up facing these walls, the intention being to make the line of the barricade the centre of the street, if the town ever outgrew its bounds. The town did outgrow its walls, but not in the days of the Dutch control, and the walls were not made the centre, but the side of the streets in question. Consequently the streets are just half as wide as the Dutch intended them to be. No, the stigma of narrow streets cannot be laid at the door of the Dutch.



Sr-rhe-hu-man, the last of the Mohawk chieftains in this neighborhood, died in the year 1783, in his little cabin on the "flats," in what is now the Town of Rotterdam. He was over a hundred years old at the time of his death, and had been a life-long friend of the whites.

Tales of Previous to 1776, he had ranked high in the **Old Bore** council of his tribe, but, when the Mohawks espoused the cause of the King, Se-che-ho-wan and a few of his tribe remained loyal to their white neighbors and were practically dropped by their tribesmen. The blow did not affect the old man's loyalty, but it did affect his health. He became rapidly feebler, and seven years after his name was forgotten by his tribe, he passed to the great beyond. At the time of his death he was attended by two friends, one an Indian, the other a white man. Just before he breathed his last, he requested a drink of water. The white man went to a neighboring spring and soon returned with the water. Raising the dying man in his arms, he placed the cup to the stiffening lips. Refreshed, the Indian sat up unaided, and with the dignity that always characterized his race, said, "I thank you!" then, with a far away look, he continued, "The father is now dead. Now the whites may come in and take all." And they have taken him at his words, even his last resting place,

somewheres along the Schuylenburg Kill, being **Tales of**
taken by the pale face race he had served so **Old Dorp**
well.



Mill Creek, although few are aware of the fact, is really not a creek at all, but a canal, dug by some of our enterprising Dutch ancestors, to furnish a mill site close to the town. The Poonties Kill, Guyslings Killitie, Schuylenburg Kill, Coehorns Kill and Brandywine Creek, all natural watercourses, were made to send their waters to the river by way of this canal. From all accounts the project was a success. The exact date of the building of the canal is unknown, although 1752 seems to be the probable one. In 1857, a project was on foot to use the creek for fire protection, but nothing ever came of it. The creek is now utilized as a sewer.

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